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Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention

Ninth periodic report of States parties due in 2016

Norway*

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I. Introduction

1. This is the ninth State report of Norway to the United Nations on Norway's implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion has coordinated the reporting process, in which relevant ministries have been involved. The comments of Sámediggi (the Sami Parliament) are included in this report. A process of consulting civil society stakeholders has taken place. A website has been established on the homepage of the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion containing information on the process and links to relevant background documents.

2. The report, which in accordance with the new United Nations guidelines, is a response to the comments by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in 2012 (CEDAW/C/NOR/CO/8) and covers Norway's implementation of the articles in parts I-IV for the period 2011-2015.

II. Issues raised in the concluding comments of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in 2007

3. Reference is made to paragraphs 8-44 of the Committee's concluding comments (CEDAW/C/NOR/CO/8) to Norway's eighth periodic report, which was submitted in 2010.

Paragraphs 8, 9 and 10 (a)

4. By the Storting (Norwegian parliament) decision of 13 May 2014, the Constitution of Norway was supplemented with a number of human rights provisions. The principles of equality and non-discrimination were incorporated into Article 98 of the Constitution with the following wording:

All people are equal under the law.

No human being must be subject to unfair or disproportionate differential treatment.

5. The Government wishes to ensure that everyone has the same opportunities and freedom to make their own choices, regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexual orientation. Efforts to promote an inclusive society are also important for gender equality. The white paper *Gender Equality in Practice: Equal Opportunities for Women and Men* (Meld. St. 7 (2015-2016)), submitted to the Storting (Parliament) in the autumn of 2015, discusses challenges related to women who have immigrated to Norway and their possibilities of obtaining employment. By strengthening the Job Opportunity programme in 2016, the Government aims to increase employment among women immigrants who are remote from the labour market.

6. The Government pursues an active policy to enable more people to participate in working life. Priority is given to persons with disabilities, who are eligible for a broad range of measures adapted to their individual needs. In 2016, around 58,000 labour market programme places (almost 80 per cent of all such places) are targeted towards persons with disabilities. This group is partly covered by the Job Strategy

for Persons with Disabilities, launched in 2012. Through the Inclusive Working Life (IA) agreement aimed at promoting a more inclusive workplace, the authorities and social partners have agreed to intensify their efforts to include persons with disabilities in working life.

Paragraph 10 (b)

7. Today, as a general rule, legislation adopted in Norway is gender-neutral, except for schemes directed particularly at women and girls or at men and boys. According to the Government's legislative drafting instructions, the potential implications of a bill for all affected parties — including the implications for equality and discrimination — must be accounted for in the analysis of the issue. The analysis report and bill must always be circulated for public consultation.

8. Several studies show that compliance with the legislative drafting instructions is weak. A study carried out by the Agency for Public Management and eGovernment (Difi) in 2012 showed that ministries fail to comply adequately with the instructions. The Office of the Auditor General of Norway also concluded in Document 3:10 (2012-2013) that the quality of the evidence base for public measures was often unsatisfactory. In Recommendation 81 S (2013-2014), the Storting's (Parliament) Standing Committee on Scrutiny and Constitutional Affairs emphasised the need for action in this area. Consequently, it was decided in spring 2014 that the legislative drafting instructions were to be revised and that measures ensuring better compliance with the instructions were to be considered. A working group consisting of the Ministry of Local Government and Modernization and the Ministry of Finance has presented a draft of the revised drafting instructions and guide. The revised instructions are scheduled to be adopted by Royal decree in February 2016. The Norwegian Government Agency for Financial Management (DFØ) will be given responsibility for administering the legislative drafting instructions and guide and will offer relevant training. In accordance with the intention of simplifying the instructions, the implications for equality and discrimination are not mentioned explicitly in the revised instructions, but the requirement is set out in the guide to the instructions.

Paragraph 10 (c)

9. The Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion contributes to knowledge-based equality policies. This includes facilitating good systems for documenting and analysing equality in various sectors of society, as exemplified by the work of the Centre for Research on Gender Equality (CORE).

10. The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs is the Government's specialist directorate for gender equality and anti-discrimination. The Directorate is responsible for initiating efforts to upgrade the expertise of state agencies in promoting gender equality, both as public authorities and as employers. In 2014, the Directorate was asked to develop a documentation system to help ensure a solid knowledge base on matters of equality and anti-discrimination related to the discriminatory grounds of gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and ethnicity. The task entails assembling, developing and communicating indicators related to equality, living conditions and the life situation of women, men, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender persons and ethnic minorities. A documentation system for persons with disabilities was developed by

the Directorate and provides an overview of and status report on the living conditions of persons with disabilities. In 2015, the Directorate launched a web-based service as part of establishing a comprehensive knowledge platform for this purpose.

11. The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud's mandate includes supervising that employers comply with their duty to report on measures to promote equality and avoid discrimination.

12. Norway submitted its first report to the United Nations Committee for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in July 2015. The Government has had dialogue meetings at political level with organizations for persons with disabilities and continued its collaboration as regulated by special cooperation agreements.

13. *National Indicators for Integration* is a tool for coordinating integration policy that is published annually as part of the national budget. It presents developments over time in key areas of society for immigrants in Norway: work, education, living conditions and participation in society. The statistics are broken down by gender and thus highlight the differences between men and women with an immigrant background, and between women with and without an immigrant background. The statistics help sector authorities to correct undesirable imbalances.

Paragraph 11

14. Reference is made to the reply under paragraphs 12 (a) and (b).

Paragraphs 12 (a) and (b)

15. The Convention and the Committee's recommendations are covered in legal studies at Norwegian universities.

Paragraph 12 (c)

16. Reference is made to the reply provided under paragraph 10 c).

17. Part of the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud's mandate is to provide information, support and guidance to individuals in efforts to promote equality and combat discrimination.

18. One of the measures in the Gender Equality 2014 action plan launched by the Stoltenberg II cabinet was to provide information on rights to women with an immigrant background. The measure aims at improving information for these women on rights and duties related to various aspects of gender equality and family policy. In 2011 and 2012, the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion allocated funding to Legal Advice for Women (JURK in Norwegian) for a national tour to inform women with an immigrant background of their rights and carry out a training programme modelled on Train the Trainer, to reach yet more women. The Norwegian Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi) has provided funding for JURK's informational efforts targeting women who have come to Norway under the family immigration scheme. JURK has also helped upgrade the skills of persons teaching Norwegian language and social studies to adult speakers of minority languages. The New in Norway website, run by IMDi, has been expanded to include information for family immigrants, and in 2013 VOX, the Norwegian Agency for

Lifelong Learning, established the "samfunnskunnskap.no" website, with a syllabus for a 50-hour social studies course for adult immigrants.

Paragraphs 13 and 14 (a)

19. A consultation document on a common equality and anti-discrimination act, which was circulated for comments in the autumn of 2015 by the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, discusses whether the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Tribunal should be empowered to handle cases of sexual harassment. The Ministry requests the consultative bodies' views on this issue. For further information on the consultation document see under article 2 b).

20. The Ministry has initiated a major study of the enforcement system in matters of equality and anti-discrimination. The aim is to enforce legislation more effectively and improve the directorate's performance. See under article 2 c) for further information on the study.

Paragraph 14 (b)

21. The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs has prepared a final summary of the Gender Equality 2014 action plan which describes the ministries' implementation of the plan's measures and assesses the impact achieved. The action plan was submitted in November 2011 and remained in effect through 2014. It has been a useful instrument for broadly promoting gender equality; however, the summary confirmed that, while men and women formally have equal rights, genuine equality between the genders is lacking in Norway. The final summary confirms that purposeful, long-term efforts will be required to achieve full gender equality.

22. The Action Plan for Promoting Equality and Preventing Ethnic Discrimination (2009-2012) was evaluated in 2013. A final evaluation was carried out of the action plan "Improving Quality of Life among Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Trans Persons 2009-2012 (2013)". The plan has resulted in greater knowledge of the LGBT population's living conditions and targeted measures at several administrative levels. The LGBT Action Plan has highlighted issues relating to lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender persons in several strategies, plans and measures promoting diversity, equality and social inclusion. Ensuring that LGBT perspectives are included in efforts to promote equality still poses a challenge. Not all the action plan measures are suitably designed to reach all LGBT target groups.

Paragraph 14 (c)

23. The Gender Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud is responsible for making his or her activities known and available to every part of the Norwegian population.

Paragraphs 15 and 16

24. The Norwegian Centre for Human Rights at the University of Oslo was designated Norway's National Institution for Human Rights in 2001. In 2011 the university informed the Government that it wished to discontinue its role as National Institution, and in 2012 the National Institution at the Centre for Human Rights was downgraded to B status.

25. The Act on Norway's National Human Rights Institution was adopted by the Storting in April 2015, and came into force on 1 July 2015. The new National Institution (NI) reports to the Storting and exercises its mandate completely independently. The new NI is presumed to satisfy the criteria of the United Nations principles relating to the Status of National Institutions (the Paris Principles). The role of the NI is to improve implementation of human rights instruments, for instance by monitoring and reporting on the status of human rights in Norway and presenting recommendations to ensure that Norway complies with its human rights obligations.

Paragraph 17

26. The Ministry of Local Government and Modernization has initiated the Local Election Day project for municipalities where fewer than 30 per cent of the members elected to the municipal council in the previous local elections were women. Municipalities that participate in this project receive information on factors conducive to improving the gender balance in municipal councils. A total of 47 municipalities signed up for the project prior to the 2015 elections.

27. The proportion of female candidates for municipal and county council seats has increased by 1 percentage point since the 2011 elections, to 43 per cent. The percentage of candidates with an immigrant background has risen 0.7 percentage points to 4.2 per cent (https://www.ssb.no/valg/statistikker/kfvalgkand).

28. The Government implemented a campaign called Local Election Day during the local nomination processes prior to the upcoming local elections in Norway in September 2015. The project targets municipal councils that have less than 30 per cent women members. The aim was to recruit more women to local politics and increase the proportion of women candidates at the top of the party lists. There are 72 (out of 428) municipalities with less than 30 per cent women and 47 of them took part in the project. Based on the research, the local parties were advised on which measures to use to increase the proportion of women.

29. According to the Norwegian Courts Administration, courts focus on recruiting more women for the posts of judge and chief judge, and a recruitment strategy has been drawn up for this purpose. The need for a special focus on recruiting women has declined in recent years as the gender balance in the applicant pool has evened out. One relevant factor is that the judges now reaching retirement age and stepping down are predominantly men; that causes the percentage of women overall to increase, since the gender balance of new appointments is more equal than in the past. The gender factor does still play a role in the appointment process in individual courts. In recruiting, balance is considered for the court in question and for Norway as a whole. According to the Supervisory Committee for Judges' annual report for 2014, 40 per cent of judges in ordinary Norwegian courts were women at year's end, while 60 per cent were men, broken down as follows:

30. Supreme Court: 35 per cent women and 65 per cent men; Courts of Appeal: 36 per cent women and 64 per cent men; District Courts: 42 per cent women and 58 per cent men.

31. Statistics for the various court levels indicate that the gender balance in Norwegian courts is relatively good, but the percentage of male judges in the Supreme Court and Courts of Appeal is still relatively high. There is a general focus

on recruiting persons with a minority background to Norwegian courts, but no special measures have been established.

32. The percentage of women and men in the university and university college sector varies by type of position. In 2013, over half of those employed in PhD positions and as lecturers and senior lecturers were women. Forty-three per cent of associate professors were women. Only 26 per cent of professors were women in 2013. The situation varies significantly by academic subject area. In 2013, over 30 per cent of professors in medicine and health studies and in the humanities were women, compared with around 10 per cent in technology subjects. The percentage of female professors has increased by around one percentage point per year since 2004. The percentage of women among newly appointed professors has risen substantially since 2008, and has varied from 30 to 36 per cent. This is an indication that the rise in the percentage of women in professorships will continue. In technology, for instance, the female proportion of new professors has doubled since 2008.

Paragraph 18 (a)

33. For information on the Government's gender equality programmes and priorities, reference is made to the white paper on gender equality See annex 2.

Paragraph 18 (b)

34. The introduction of a gender balance requirement for boards of public limited companies and other enterprises has proved effective in increasing the percentage of women on these boards. However, it has not led to an increase of women in executive positions in the business sector.

35. Among private limited companies, which make up the majority of Norwegian companies, 18 per cent of board members are women. Most private limited companies have few shareholders and half (51 per cent) of all limited companies have only one board member (2015).On 87 per cent of the boards of private limited companies with one member, that member is a man.

36. There are several reasons why it is difficult to regulate private limited companies in the same way as public limited companies. Automated oversight of a sample of today's 260,000 or so registered limited companies is not feasible. Manual oversight based on self-reporting by companies may lead to some uncertainty as to which companies are covered.

Paragraph 18 (c)

37. The Ministry of Local Government and Diversity monitors the representativity of women in politics, including minority women. Reference is made to Chapter III of Norway's Eighth Periodic Report to CEDAW regarding the letter of intent between the Directorate of Integration and Diversity and major non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Several NGOs run activities that help increase local community participation by women with immigrant backgrounds. The Government also granted NOK 49.1 million for NGO activities to promote integration in 2015. For instance, the JURK legal advisory service for women received funding to provide rights-related information to women who have come to Norway through the family reunification programme. The KUN centre for gender equality developed a mentoring programme aimed at ensuring that immigrant women and men have a real

possibility of finding employment, and created a network. The Norwegian Trekking Association (DNT) recruits women with immigrant backgrounds to engage in voluntary work through excursions and outdoor activities. Support and grants for NGO integration activities were increased by NOK 30 million in 2016 and now totals NOK 82.2 million for this year.

Paragraphs 19 and 20

38. The primary means of realising the ambitions of the resolutions on women, peace and security are diplomacy, political work and financing. Norway applies all these means in its cooperation with partners, emphasising that responsibility for implementing the resolutions in our partner countries lies chiefly with the countries' own authorities, and in the assertive role played by civil society and other stakeholders. Norway's efforts to advance implementation of the resolutions are two-pronged, focusing on the authorities at policy level and on civil society to strengthen its capacity to hold the authorities accountable.

39. Norway supports local women's organizations financially, directly or through Norwegian partners. Norway promotes and calls for the participation of women and women's organizations in peace processes and post-conflict reconstruction processes, particularly where Norway has an active role.

40. Norway's third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, presented in 2015 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, is attached herewith (see appendix 3). The focus on results has been intensified, and frameworks and reporting structures are being developed to improve the measurement of performance at country level. The designation of five priority countries is another way of achieving improved results.

Paragraphs 21 and 22

41. The Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion has funded research into media representation of girls and women, resulting in a report on retouched advertisements and body-image pressure. This report, by the National Institute for Consumer Research (SIFO), concluded that many young people are under extensive social pressure to conform to body ideals. The Government has recently strengthened the school health service and health centres. It has been documented that girls use these services to a larger degree than the boys.

42. This autumn, the Government began work on developing an anti-hate speech strategy. The Government wishes to strengthen its base of knowledge in this field and has therefore proposed increasing allocations to the Ministry's budget for efforts to combat hate speech. The Government will also continue to support the Stop Hate Speech campaign in 2016.

Paragraph 22 (b)

43. To follow up on measures in the Gender Equality 2014 action plan, the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion and the Ministry of Education and Research jointly financed the production of four short films on gender equality and gender roles for use in social studies in lower secondary school. The goal was to increase understanding of gender equality and gender roles. In the past few years,

the Ministry of Education and Research has run national recruitment campaigns to increase enrolment in pre-school teacher training programmes (GLØD) and teacher training programmes (GNIST), to upgrade the occupational status of pre-school teachers and teachers, and to attract more male applicants. The final report on the LGBT action plan concluded that day-care centres need pre-school teachers with gender diversity training.

Paragraph 22 (c)

44. The Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion asked the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs to prepare a final summary of the Gender Equality 2014 action plan with focus on the ministries' implementation of plan measures and an assessment of their impact. They presented their report in 2015.

Paragraph 23

45. In 2014, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security launched a five-year research programme to produce knowledge as to the causes, extent and consequences of domestic violence and public and NGO efforts. A total of NOK 50 million has been allocated for the programme. In addition, the Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies (NKVTS) has been given an annual grant of NOK 2 million for research into the health consequences of domestic violence. In addition the same ministry is funding a three-year research project to review every intimate partner homicide in the 1991-2012 period, to be completed in 2016.

46. The Government is currently establishing a new web portal on domestic violence and rape for persons exposed to such violence and for the health and social services. The web portal, which will be run by NKVTS, the Norwegian Women's Public Health Association and other voluntary organizations, is to provide easy access to information about rights and assistance.

47. On 15 October 2015, the police launched a new campaign to prevent domestic violence. The information campaign *Hvor lite skal du finne deg i?* (How Little Should You Tolerate?) aims to increase knowledge of domestic violence and the assistance police can provide, so that persons subjected to such violence can seek help to escape from a violent situation. The campaign is funded by the Ministry of Justice and Public Security. The purpose of the campaign is to reduce barriers between the general public and the public authorities and to encourage more persons exposed to violence to contact services for help. The campaign consists of a website (hvorlite.no) with a checklist for danger signals, posters, a film, and advertising available in several languages.

48. Many municipalities today have prepared municipal or inter-municipal action plans. However, the majority of municipalities have no such plans. The Regional Centres for Violence, Traumatic Stress and Suicide Prevention (RVTS) are charged with assisting municipalities to develop plans. In addition, an online guide has been established to assist in preparing action plans. The NKVTS's task is to develop, maintain and disseminate knowledge and expertise that can help prevent violence and traumatic stress and reduce the health-related and social consequences. The centre receives operational funding from the Ministry of Health and Care Services, the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion and the Ministry of Justice and Public Security. In 2015, the basic grant totalled NOK 42.4 million, in 2016 it is NOK 40.6 million The NKVTS also receives project funding for projects such as

research on female genital mutilation, on minorities exposed to domestic violence, and on the handling of violence and abuse cases under the Children Act, as well as for two projects to examine treatment programmes for perpetrators of violence. The reports from these projects were presented in 2015.

49. See paragraph 24 (d) for information on crisis centres.

Paragraph 24 (a)

50. Reference is made to the 2014 progress report, on paragraph 24. A white paper on domestic violence was followed up by an action plan against domestic violence, Et liv uten vold (A Life without Violence), for the 2014-2017 period. The plan comprises 45 measures involving prevention, knowledge and expertise, assistance and treatment, criminal prosecution and cooperation and coordination. The Government is following up the action plan by defining and developing specific measures.

51. Persons subjected to domestic violence or threats of such violence are entitled to assistance and protection and to effective action by the police and the judicial system. Domestic violence is punishable in the same way as violence that occurs in other contexts and arenas. How the police, prosecutors and courts deal with domestic violence cases largely determines the extent to which they are trusted by persons subjected to violence and by the population at large. Swift follow-up by the police and judicial system has a significant preventive effect.

52. Police efforts to combat domestic violence have been strengthened substantially in recent years, and the police now have a number of new means of safeguarding and protecting vulnerable persons. An important measure is the establishment of family violence coordinators in every police district in Norway, whose task is to maintain an overview of the police district's overall efforts in the field of family violence. In addition, sexual abuse coordinators have been established in the police districts. In some districts these two functions are carried out by the same person. Several districts also have dedicated teams that operate on a cross-district basis in domestic violence investigations and cases of sexual abuse. Dedicated teams have been established to investigate special cases. In the most serious cases, the National Criminal Investigations Service (KRIPOS) can provide assistance.

53. Other measures are the national expertise-sharing portal KO:DE and the inclusion of domestic violence as a topic in basic police training.

54. The police have a range of measures to protect persons subjected to domestic violence, including a mobile violence alarm, bans on visits or contact, and address shielding. Since 2013 the police have been given additional tools: a ban on contact can be reinforced through electronic monitoring (reverse assault alarm).

55. The SARA (*Spousal assault risk assessment guide*) risk assessment tool is now being introduced in every police district in Norway. SARA helps to structure the police's threat assessment work by means of a checklist of 15 risk factors for intimate partner violence. SARA helps to prevent intimate partner violence and ensures that targeted safety and protection measures are implemented where necessary. The Ministry of Justice and Public Security has granted funding to the Crisis Centre in Vestfold to develop and test a similar tool, "SARA for children", for

assessing children's risk of exposure to recurring violence. The tool is expected to have transfer value for the police.

56. Persons subjected to domestic violence are entitled to assistance that covers all needs and aspects of the case. This help must extend to the person's children and the perpetrator of the violence. In the spring of 2015, the urban district of Stovner in Oslo established a collaborative project in which the police and health and care services offer assistance at the same location for persons subjected to violence. The project results will be evaluated as part of the Norwegian social research institute NOVA's domestic violence research programme.

57. In 2014, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security established a new funding scheme for measures to prevent and combat domestic violence. In 2016, funding totalled NOK 11.6 million and was distributed on the basis of applications to NGOs and other non-profit organizations, private actors and crisis centres. A total of 31 different measures received funding from this scheme in 2015. The Ministry has also established a forum to strengthen cooperation between national authorities and NGOs.

58. The Ministry has therefore earmarked funds for a special "prevention package" to strengthen efforts to combat domestic violence in the long and short term. In 2014, funds were allocated to a domestic violence campaign targeting youth and run on the Office for Children, Youth and Family Affairs' website ung.no. Funds were also earmarked through this "package" to adapt the International Child Development Programme (ICDP), a parental guidance programme, for crisis centres (2014) and asylum reception centres (2015).

Paragraph 24 (b)

59. All cases of involuntary sexual activity must be covered by criminal legislation. This legislation and its enforcement must afford genuine, effective protection against involuntary sexual activity. The wording of the current penal provision relating to rape specifies the different instances of non-consensual sexual activity. The provision applies both to any person who engages in sexual activity by means of violence or threats and to any person who engages in sexual activity with someone who is unconscious or incapable for any other reason of resisting the act. Under the provision, use of force is not a requirement for sexual activity to be seen as involuntary.

60. The Rights Commission, which was appointed by the King in Council in autumn 2015, will analyse and assess the changes that are necessary to ensure the fulfilment of fundamental rights for persons with disabilities. The Committee is to submit its report in June 2016.

Paragraph 24 (c)

61. It is incumbent upon the individual professional judge presiding over a case to present the topics relevant to the case in question, and to instruct and explain the court proceedings to the lay judges. Lay judges thus receive no specific training on the subject of violence against women. However, there is extensive focus in society on the issue of violence against women, and a national prevention strategy has been prepared.

Paragraph 24 (d)

62. Persons with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to abuse Few cases of the abuse of persons with disabilities are revealed and reported to the police. The Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs has drawn up new guidelines and established the abuse protection website vernmotovergrep.no, which receives around 900 hits per month.

63. Grants for crisis centres were increased by NOK 3 million in 2016. Reference is made to the information reported on the Crisis Centre Act in Norway's Eighth Periodic Report (see paragraphs 21 and 22, paragraph 15) and to Norway's progress report of March 2014 (paragraph 24 (d)). The Norwegian social research institute NOVA was commissioned by the Directorate to evaluate municipalities' implementation of the Crisis Centre Act.[1] The evaluation shows that the crisis centre users are satisfied with the help they receive, and that the services have improved. Most of the centres now have specialized child support personnel, and most centre employees have higher education. This testifies to increased professionalism at the centres.

64. The evaluation shows inadequacies in the way municipalities meet the needs of men exposed to violence and their accompanying children. The same applies to services for persons with substance abuse or serious mental health problems, and services for persons with disabilities. A few more crisis centres have now been adapted for persons with physical disabilities, but far from all the centres conform to universal design standards. Nor have the municipalities fully succeeded in coordinating assistance.

65. In February 2015, the Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs launched a guide to the Crisis Centre Act. Adaptation of services to the individual needs of women and men, persons with disabilities and persons with an ethnic minority background are some of the topics covered in the guide. The guide is now being widely distributed. The Directorate has assigned the Regional Centres for Violence, Traumatic Stress and Suicide Prevention (RVTS) the task of organizing national and regional training programmes particularly designed for crisis centre employees.

66. In 2015, the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion commissioned the Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs to prepare draft regulations on the physical protection of premises. The Directorate is also currently reviewing services for children in crisis centres, including children's right to assistance from other services. The county governor oversees municipal implementation of the Crisis Centre Act. The Ministry will undertake a detailed assessment of this oversight.

67. Norway signed the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) on 7 July 2011. The Ministry of Justice and Public Security is preparing a Proposition

[1] Bakketeig, Elisiv, Elisabeth Gording Stang, Christian Madsen, Ingrid Smette and Kari Stefansen (2014): *Krisesentertilbudet i kommunene — Evaluering av kommunenes implementering av krisesenterloven*. Rapport nr. 19/14. Velferdsforskningsinstituttet NOVA ved Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus. [Municipal Crisis Centre Services — Evaluation of Municipal Implementation of the Crisis Centre Act. Report no. 19/14. The Norwegian social research institute NOVA at the University College of Oslo and Akershus].

to the Storting regarding statutory amendments to comply with Article 34 of the Convention, on stalking, Article 36, on sexual violence; and Article 37, on forced marriage.

Paragraph 25

68. Since 2012, exploitation of women or girls in households has increased, particularly within the au pair system. Among au pairs believed to have been exploited, exploitation was in the form of forced labour. Reports concerning au pairs subjected to forced labour have increased. The system is controversial, partly due to claims that Norwegian families abuse the system to acquire underpaid domestic help, particularly from the Philippines. As a result, the *Au Pair Centre — On Equal Terms* was opened in January 2013. The centre is a place where both au pairs and host families can find information and advice, and the primary aim is to strengthen legal protection of au pairs. According to the centre, only 20 per cent of au pairs come to Norway through an au pair agency, which interviews and screens both the au pairs and host families. This means that as many as 80 per cent have entered into private contracts in response to Internet advertisements.

Paragraph 26 (a)

69. The Police's Coordinating Unit for Victims of Trafficking (KOM), whose task is to analyse information on the extent and nature of human trafficking in Norway, publishes an annual status report with an overview of the national human trafficking situation. The 2014 report (published in July 2015) confirms that the authorities and organizations face a wide range of challenges, and proposes a variety of measures. The Government intends to present a new action plan to combat human trafficking.

Paragraph 26 (b)

70. The following table shows the number of possible new human trafficking victims identified by authorities or organizations in recent years:

2010	*2011*	*2012*	*2013*	*2014*
127 victims	134	136	124	157

71. In 2014, a total of 324 persons (252 women, 15 of whom were under the age of 18, and 72 men) were being followed up as victims of human trafficking, i.e. most of them had been identified before 2014. Of the women, 212 were exploited for prostitution, while 14 were exploited within the au pair system.

72. Norway has ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings, which ensures the systematic monitoring and periodic evaluation of how Norway implements the obligations of the Convention. The Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) issued its first report on Norway in the spring of 2013. The report contains a number of recommendations on how to strengthen efforts to combat trafficking.

Paragraph 26 (c)

73. Norway contributes to reducing social and economic disparities in Europe through the EEA Financial Mechanisms. These mechanisms also strengthen contact and cooperation between Norway and the 16 recipient countries. Funding provided through the EEA Financial Mechanisms totalled around EUR 1.8 billion for 2009-2014, of which Norway's share is around 97 per cent.

74. Tackling domestic and gender based violence and promoting gender equality are important priorities for the Grants. In the 2009-2014 funding period, €53 million was set aside for various gender equality measures and measures to combat gender-based violence. Gender equality is furthermore one of three cross-cutting issues which should be taken into consideration in all activities funded by the EEA and Norway Grants.

75. The EU and the EEA-EFTA states concluded negotiations on a new agreement in July 2015. Pending signature 2.8 billion EUR will be made available for the period 2014-2021. The set-up will be a continuation of the EEA and Norway Grants 2009-2014, with some modifications. Combating domestic violence and promoting gender equality will continue to be supported.

76. Cooperation centring on the EEA Financial Mechanisms, the domestic violence programme area and gender equality is continuing through participation in individual projects and programme partnerships.

Paragraph 26 (d)

77. Possible victims who are granted a temporary, six-month residence permit will receive assistance regardless of whether they report human traffickers. The municipality in which the victims are staying is responsible for providing such assistance. Furthermore, central government support is provided for specialized projects for victims of human trafficking.

78. Under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), all children under 18 are entitled to the same health services as other citizens in Norway, even if they do not reside in the country legally. This means they are entitled to necessary health care from both the municipal health and care services and the specialist health service; see Article 24 of the CRC regarding "...the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health".

79. Adults without legal residence are, from the age of 18, entitled in some degree to necessary health care from the municipality. This largely applies to health care that cannot be postponed (emergency care). The health care provided must be appropriate. Under the CRC, pregnant women are entitled to pre-natal and post-natal health care.

80. The Norwegian State Housing Bank offers a number of measures that municipalities can use to help persons who are disadvantaged in the housing market. People who have been subjected to human trafficking and other refugees will in many cases be among the target group for such measures. For example, they may apply for municipal rental housing, housing grants to establish a home, start-up loans or a housing allowance.

Paragraph 26 (e)

81. Five years after the Act prohibiting the purchase of sexual services came into force, the Government requested an independent evaluation of the effects of the Act. As stated in the report published in August 2014, buying sex was criminalized in 2009. The main rationale for implementing the Act was to prevent and reduce human trafficking in Norway. The aim of the act is to: 1) change attitudes in the population, 2) reduce the size of the Norwegian sex market by constraining supply and demand, and 3) prevent entry into prostitution and thus reduce the possible sexual exploitation of men and women in prostitution. The Act also seeks to protect people in prostitution and to help people transition out of prostitution. A main finding of the evaluation was that the Act had reduced demand for commercial sex and thus contributed to reduce the extent of prostitution in Norway. Enforcement of the Act, combined with the laws against trafficking and pimping, makes Norway a less attractive country for prostitution-based trafficking than it would have been if the Act had not been adopted. Furthermore, the economic conditions for prostitution in Norway have worsened since the Act was adopted. The evaluation found no evidence of increased violence against prostitutes since the ban on buying sex entered into force.[2]

Paragraph 27

82. The white paper *Gender Equality in Practice: Equal Opportunities for Women and Men* (Meld. St. 7 (2015-2016)) refers to the 2010 and 2014 status surveys of gender equality in day-care centres, in which recruitment of men was a topic. In 2014, around one third of the day-care centre directors replied that they had taken steps to recruit men. The researchers conducting the survey in 2010 found that the day-care centres that already actively promote gender equality have greater success in recruiting more men. The Ministry of Education and Research wishes to recruit more men for pedagogical work in day-care centres. County governors receive funding for regional networks for local recruitment and for professional gatherings. These activities include a focus on recruiting men.

83. See the last paragraph under paragraph 17, on the percentage of women in academia.

Paragraph 28

84. In 2012-2013 the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training carried out a project to assess how university colleges could more fully incorporate gender equality and multicultural perspectives in post-graduate courses and continuing education for primary and secondary school counsellors. A report on the project points to a need for further focus on efforts to promote gender equality and multicultural perspectives.

85. Educational institutions are required to have action plans for gender equality. The Ministry of Education and Research has established the Committee for Gender Balance and Diversity in Research, which works actively to promote equality in the university and university college sector. The Ministry has defined the percentage of women in top positions as a management indicator in the higher education sector. The Ministry monitors developments through the management system, and raises

[2] Vista analysis, 2014.

issues regarding inadequate results with the institutions and the Research Council of Norway at governance meetings.

The Research Council of Norway: Gender balance in senior positions and research management (BALANSE)

86. In order to increase the number of women professors (grade A positions) in Norway, the Research Council of Norway launched a new initiative, Gender Balance in Senior Positions and Research Management (BALANSE), in 2013. BALANSE seeks to promote gender balance among senior-level researchers in Norway through new knowledge, learning and innovative measures. Common measures in BALANSE projects are leadership development, workshops for women researchers currently in grade-B positions, media and communication training to boost esteem among traditionally modest women researchers, creation of cross-institutional networking groups, establishment of mentoring programmes, external evaluations of CVs and planning of required research portfolios, grants to enable full-time dedication to research, funds for inviting top international researchers to small workshops with various BALANSE participants, etc.

The Norwegian Committee for Gender Balance and Diversity in Research

The committee's objective:

87. The committee shall support and make recommendations regarding measures that promote the integration of gender balance and diversity activities at universities, university colleges and research institutes, thus helping to increase diversity among the staff and in research. Its primary task in the 2014–2017 period is to address gender and ethnicity issues, and to integrate diversity perspectives, including gender perspectives, in research. Actors and institutions in the higher education and research institute sector, and ministries and the Research Council of Norway, may request assistance and advice from the committee. The committee's tasks are primarily linked to the Ministry of Education and Research's areas of responsibility, and must reflect international perspectives. The committee's most fruitful and effective activities include regular visits to higher education institutions and research institutes and top-level meetings to discuss gender balance measures and share good practice.

88. Women have been able to perform military service since 1976, but the percentage of women has been low. However, since the mid-2000s it has risen steadily. As of 1 January 2015 both men and women are required to do military service, and Norway has introduced universal conscription, thereby removing an important obstacle to an untraditional educational and occupational option for women. To strengthen the Norwegian Armed Forces' expertise, comprehensive efforts are made to recruit and retain more female recruits, non-commissioned officers and commissioned officers. Measures include research, assessment of recruitment processes and selection criteria, environmental health and safety work, gender sensitisation training for senior officers, assessment of career opportunities, and family policy measures to provide optimal conditions for attracting women to choose the Armed Forces. This has boosted knowledge and awareness within the organization. Over time, the expanded scope of conscription is expected to promote the recruitment of more women to the military profession. The Armed Forces also

work purposefully to include the issues of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression in its training and activities.

Paragraph 29

89. On average, those who have themselves immigrated participate less in the labour market than the rest of the population. Altogether, immigrant women had an average employment rate that was nearly nine percentage points lower than the rate for women in the rest of the population in 2014[3], compared to 4 per cent for immigrant men.

90. Immigrants to Norway vary widely in terms of both their reasons for coming to Norway and the type of skills they bring with them. Some come as labour immigrants, others as refugees and still others for the purpose of family reunification. Generally speaking, the availability of work is an important motive for immigrants from the EEA, and employment among these groups is also higher than for groups from Asia and Africa. Many immigrants from Asia and Africa come to Norway as refugees and for the purpose of family reunification. They must adapt their skills to the Norwegian labour market in order to get jobs.

91. Wage differences between women and men have shrunk since 2009, and full-time women employees now earn an average of 88.4 per cent of men's wages, compared with 86.7 per cent in 2009; see Figure 33. If part-time employees are included, the wage disparities increase slightly. One reason for wage differences is that men and women work in different sectors, industries and positions. The supply of and demand for various types of labour also affect wage levels. Adjusted for qualifications, sector, industry and occupation, the wage gap is just below 7.5 per cent, according to a 2014 report from the Norwegian social research institute NOVA.

Paragraph 30 (a) and (b)

92. Reference is made to the reply in Norway's progress report of March 2014.

93. Parental benefit is granted on the basis of labour force participation in the months preceding the commencement of parental leave. Both women and men can earn parental benefit rights. In cases where only the father is entitled to parental benefit, he may only receive it if the mother is employed or engaged in studies or similar activities. Women who are not entitled to parental benefit receive a lump-sum grant after giving birth. The lump-sum grant has increased by a total of 25 per cent in the past two years.

94. The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs has prepared a guide for employers to facilitate conversations with employees who are pregnant or who will be taking, or are currently on, parental leave. The guide is designed to promote fruitful dialogue and greater awareness of the rights and obligations related to pregnancy and parental leave, and to help ensure that women and men are not discriminated against and that stereotyped perceptions of the care roles of women and men do not sway the dialogue on one's exercise of parental leave or ambitions for working life.

[3] Registered employment statistics. Statistics Norway.

95. The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud (LDO) has conducted a campaign aimed at preventing discrimination against pregnant women and parents on parental leave in 2015. In this connection, the LDO has developed good pointers and checklists for employers, as well as information for persons who feel that they are being discriminated against.

Paragraph 30 (c)

96. Reference is made to Norway's progress report of March 2014. Approved amendments to the Working Environment Act have also been made, which came into force on 1 July 2015. These amendments concern working hours and make it easier to find solutions at the local level. This gives employees and employers greater flexibility and can contribute to an increase in rotation-based positions, thereby reducing the use of small part-time positions.

97. In 2011, a requirement was introduced in health enterprises to reduce the use of part-time positions in hospitals by 20 per cent. Systematic efforts have been made to meet this requirement, and use of part-time workers has now been reduced by around 20 per cent in all regional health enterprises.

Paragraph 30 (d)

98. Reference is made to the earlier reply in Norway's progress report to CEDAW of 23 March 2014.

99. Wage negotiations in Norway are the responsibility of the parties concerned and the central government does not wish to become involved in these negotiations. Nonetheless, it is a Government objective to ensure that the negotiations are conducted as effectively as possible. The Technical Calculation Committee for Wage Settlements issues an annual report on various aspects of the Norwegian economy, including wage growth, for use in the negotiations. The report also contains wage statistics broken down by gender.

100. Statistics Norway's introduction of the Electronic Dialogue with Employer (EDAG) project as from 2016 (entailing use of reported data rather than sample surveys) will also make it possible to produce better wage statistics than at present, including the possibility of ordering various customised wage statistics.

Paragraph 30 (e)

101. Reference is made to the reply in Norway's progress report of March 2014.

102. As stated earlier, a research project has been initiated through the Research Council of Norway to assess the effects of the pension reform, including its impact on gender equality. This evaluation will continue until 2018.

Paragraph 30 (f)

103. The Job Opportunity programme was introduced as a permanent measure from the summer of 2013 with a view to increasing employment among immigrants aged 18-55 who have little chance of participating in the labour market, and who are not covered by other schemes. Stay-at-home mothers who are not dependent on social security benefits are a priority target group. Sixty per cent of those who completed the programme in 2013 went straight to a job and/or education.

104. As part of the Government's strategy to combat child poverty (2015-2017) *Barn som lever i fattigdom* (Children Living in Poverty), additional funding of NOK 10 million has been granted for the Job Opportunity programme as from 2016. A priority target group for the expanded programme is family members reunified with Norwegian and Nordic nationals. The goal is increased participation in working life, especially for women in low-income families.

Paragraph 30 (g)

105. The Norwegian regulatory framework for public procurement is based on EU directives and is intended to ensure the effective use of society's resources in connection with public procurement. It comprises procedural rules designed to help achieve this objective, and allows the use of public procurement contracts as a strategic instrument for achieving other societal goals. A new set of rules, scheduled to enter into force in 2016, will expand and highlight this scope for action. It is up to the contractor to determine which considerations are to be taken into account in each procurement contract and in which way. The relevant and appropriate factors to emphasise will vary from one contract to another. Where gender equality is concerned, this is regulated in general legislation and followed up through the ordinary supervisory bodies, whether or not the enterprise is a supplier to the public sector. Norway therefore does not view a separate gender-equality provision in the Public Procurement Act as a suitable instrument.

Paragraph 31

106. The Sami Parliament and the Ministry of Justice and Public Security are co-funding a project aimed at acquiring better knowledge of domestic violence in Sami communities. The purpose of the project is to identify the factors in Sami communities that affect the incidence and commission of domestic violence, and determine how exposure of such violence, preventive measures and assistance can best be adapted to the Sami population. The Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies (NKVTS) was commissioned to carry out the project in a 2014 assignment letter.

107. Recently published research shows that 49 per cent of Sami women surveyed had been exposed to violence. By way of comparison, 29.6 per cent of ethnic Norwegian participants in the study had been subjected to violence. In this study, Sami women report a higher incidence of all types of violence, whether emotional, physical or sexual, than the rest of the population. Sami women also report a higher incidence of sexual violence experienced as a child — 17 per cent compared with 11 per cent in the rest of the population. In most of the cases, the perpetrator is reported as someone known to the person subjected to the violence. The research study provides no information as to who subjected the participants to sexual abuse or violence.

108. Combating violence requires focus and efforts in several areas, including both prevention and treatment.

109. The Sami Parliament has overall responsibility for shaping Sami health and care service policy and is the primary contributor to the Norwegian authorities of input for developing equitable services for the Sami people. In the process of adapting services, the Sami Parliament plays a coordinating advocacy role in respect of the central authorities. Sami patients, regardless of gender, have rights guaranteed

by national laws and international conventions. Section 3-5 of the Sami Act confers on inhabitants of the Sami administrative area the right to use the Sami language to protect their own interests when dealing with local and regional public health and care institutions, and entitles them to be served in Sami if they so desire.

110. An evaluation of the Action Plan for Combating Female Genital Mutilation (2008-2011) shows the measures contribute to an increased focus on targeted health information, preventive health efforts and the provision of health care when needed in connection with female genital mutilation.

111. The Action Plan Against Forced Marriage, Female Genital Mutilation and Severe Restrictions on Young People's Freedom (2013-2016) follows up on earlier action plans from 2012 and for the 2008-2011 period. The action plan is coordinated by the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion. Plan measures include an assessment of how to reach relevant groups with effective, accurate information to prevent female genital mutilation.

112. The social research institute NOVA is carrying out a process evaluation of the current action plan. The first sub-report identifies structural challenges in the way public enterprises have organized implementation of the action plan's main goals of better collaboration and coordination with general efforts to prevent and mitigate violence and abuse.[4]

113. The second sub-report in the process evaluation takes a closer look at efforts to combat female genital mutilation. The evaluation shows that knowledge and preparedness in the health and social services have improved, compared with earlier studies. The evaluation considers efforts focused directly on the target group to be limited, and recommends broadening the range of funding recipients. The evaluation recommends focusing special attention on female genital mutilation in order to maintain efforts at the current level and further develop local measures.

114. The Directorate of Integration and Diversity administers the grant scheme for voluntary organizations' preventive and awareness-raising efforts to combat forced marriage, female genital mutilation and serious restrictions on young people's freedom.

115. The Norwegian Centre for Minority Health Research (NAKMI) has commenced a research project on the self-reported incidence of female genital mutilation and the attitudes of young Somalis in Oslo towards its prevention. The project is scheduled to be completed in 2017.

Paragraph 32 (a)

116. In a minority health perspective, both language and cultural aspects of communication can obstruct de facto access to health services.

117. The municipality and health authorities have a duty to offer each individual appropriate health and care services. If an interpreter is needed to fulfil this duty, an interpreter must be used.

118. State-owned hospitals and municipalities have been instructed to use qualified interpretation services. The Directorate of Health has prepared a guide for health personnel. The hospitals have also been instructed to implement measures to ensure

[4] Bredal and Lidén (2015).

that linguistic and cultural background does not prevent patients from receiving adequate help.

119. In some hospitals, health personnel are required to take courses in Sami language and cultural understanding. Some municipalities have prepared a simple dictionary for use in care services, which has proved useful in efforts to assist older users who speak only Sami.

120. The Directorate of Health will implement measures to strengthen the language and cultural skills of health service personnel. A number of Sami centres are located in districts with small Sami populations. These centres play an important role in communicating knowledge of the Sami culture and language to the majority population and especially to health personnel. The Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion has established an official committee which has prepared a report on interpretation in public services and proposed a number of measures. The Government will follow up on the report during the current parliamentary period.

Paragraphs 32 (b) and (c)

121. In the Government's political platform, efforts to combat female genital mutilation (FGM) are described as a Government priority. The Government's 2014-2017 strategy for intensifying international efforts to eradicate FGM doubles support for civil society and international organizations working to eliminate FGM. This strategy reinforces the link between Norwegian and international efforts. Some diaspora communities in Norway originate from countries among those with the highest prevalence of FGM.

Paragraphs 33 and 34

122. The Act relating to a prohibition against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression (the Sexual Orientation Anti-Discrimination Act) came into force on 1 January 2014. The purpose of the Act is to promote equality irrespective of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. In this Act, equality refers to equal status, equal opportunities and rights, accessibility and accommodation. The Act applies to all sectors of society, except for family life and other purely personal relationships.

123. In 2013-14 the living conditions of lesbians, gays and bisexuals (LGB persons) were surveyed in Norway. The previous major survey had been carried out in 1999. A survey of attitudes towards LGBT persons was also conducted by the University of Bergen with funding from the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion. The living conditions survey shows significant differences between the groups: lesbians are generally better off, in some ways better than heterosexual women, while bisexual persons face greater challenges. They stand out negatively with regard to openness in the workplace, mental health, attempted suicide, loneliness and satisfaction with life. New research has revealed that lesbian and bisexual women must also contend with some extra health challenges.

124. In 2016 the Government will present a new LGBT action plan to address challenges revealed in the living condition surveys. The new plan will initially focus on three priority areas: safe neighbourhoods and public spaces, equitable public services and better quality of life for particularly vulnerable groups.

125. In June, the Ministry of Health and Care Services circulated a draft bill on the process of changing legal gender. The bill entails, for instance, removing the current requirement of medical treatment, including sterilisation, in order to change legal gender. The Ministry proposes that persons aged 16 and over be allowed to change legal gender if they wish to do so, without any period of reflection. According to the proposal, persons aged 7-16 may apply to change legal gender together with the person or persons who have parental responsibility. If the child has two parents who share parental responsibility and one does not wish to apply for a change, the most reasonable course of action would be for the child to wait until the age of 16 before making any change.

126. The Ministry also proposes that the legal gender of a child under the age of 7 may only be changed if the child's somatic gender development is congenitally uncertain. Parents may apply on behalf of the child. The child's condition must be documented by health personnel. Applications for changes of legal gender are to be dealt with by the tax office. The tax offices' decisions may be appealed to the County Governor of Oslo and Akershus.

127. The Ministry has also sought comment on recommendations for strengthening health services that were made in a report submitted by an expert group to the Ministry in early April 2015.

128. The Ministry of Health and Care Services is following up both of these consultations.

Paragraph 35

129. The labour market participation of women with disabilities is lower than that of women in general (43.5 per cent of women aged 15-64), but unlike men with disabilities, their participation rate has increased since 2009. Reference is also made here to the discussion under Article 11 (e) in the CEDAW Convention.

130. The Government has implemented several vocational measures to help more immigrants find employment. Men and women who are legally resident in Norway and who contact the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) are entitled, like other people, to a needs or work capacity assessment carried out by NAV. The kind of measure offered depends, in part, on the kind of assistance the individual needs to enter employment. Unemployed immigrants from countries outside the EEA are given priority in the allocation of places in labour market programmes. Immigrant women participate in such programmes to a greater degree than immigrant men and also to a greater degree than Norwegian-born women. Evaluations show that immigrants have a higher chance of finding a job if they participate in a time-limited wage subsidy scheme or a labour market training (AMO) course. Many of the measures include work-oriented Norwegian language instruction.

131. Persons who have been granted a residence permit as a spouse or cohabitant of someone residing in Norway must, as a general rule, return to their home country if the cohabitation ceases before the foreign national has been granted a permanent residence permit in Norway. However, if there is reason to believe that the spouse/cohabitant (or children, if any) has been abused during cohabitation, permission for continued residence must, upon application, be granted on an independent basis. The threshold for obtaining a residence permit is generally low in

such cases, and there is no requirement as to the duration of the marriage/cohabitation. Nor is there any requirement of a causal relationship between the abuse and the cessation of cohabitation, and it does not matter which of the parties initiated the break-up.

132. A proposal to increase the period-of-residence requirement for a permanent residence permit from three to five years was circulated for consultation in the spring of 2015. The Ministry specifically requested input on the consequences of increasing the residence requirement for persons subjected to abuse in their cohabitation relationship. The Ministry of Justice and Public Security has received numerous comments and suggestions, such as calls for more rights-related information and for a review of how the Immigration Regulations' provision on abuse is practiced. The consultation document is currently being followed up by the Ministry.

Paragraph 36 (a)

133. The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs has been commissioned by the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion to create a forum on ethnic discrimination. The forum participants are directorates in key sectors of society such as employment, health, education, integration and the police, as well as the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud and the Ministry of Local Government and Modernization. The primary purpose of the forum is to exchange experience and knowledge of efforts to promote equality and eliminate discrimination in the various sectors and service areas. The objective is to increase knowledge and improve efforts to address challenges. The forum will consider ethnic discrimination in conjunction with the other types. The forum held its first meeting in 2015.

Paragraph 36 (b)

134. The Government will develop a new and comprehensive policy for adults at risk of labour market exclusion, or who are already excluded. This policy will be presented in 2016 in a white paper on labour market exclusion and adult education. The Government's goal is to help individuals develop competencies and basic skills that can serve as the basis for a stable, long-lasting attachment to working life. Adults at risk of being excluded from the labour market, or who are excluded, form a complex group of both women and men. The target group consists of young adults who are neither employed nor in secondary education, as well as people whose education, basic skills and/or Norwegian language abilities are too weak for them to gain entry into the labour market. Immigrants whose qualifications are not recognized in Norway are also a targeted group.

135. The Government's action plan for making better use of the competence of immigrants in the labour market — titled "We need the competence of immigrants"[5] — is being implemented. One measure is a grant scheme to initiate and support company-based mentor and trainee programmes for people with immigrant backgrounds. The scheme's purpose is to encourage more companies to initiate and systematise such programmes. Another grant scheme that has been

[5] An English summary of the plan is available at: http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/bld/documents/Reports-and-plans/Plans/2013/summary-of-the-action-plan-2013-2016-we-.html?id=735937.

introduced is intended to strengthen and develop regional and local advisory services on entrepreneurship. The aim is to make such services more relevant to the situation and needs of immigrants.

136. The Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT) is authorized to make decisions regarding the general recognition of applicants with foreign higher-education qualifications. On the basis of experience from a pilot project, a recognition procedure has been established for persons who lack verifiable documentation (UVD).[6]

137. In view of the increased number of asylum arrivals, the Government has added a supplementary item in the national budget for 2016 that proposes integration policy changes. The Government intends to present a white paper on integration policy in spring 2016. It also proposes to compile an overview of refugees' skills, so that those who arrive with existing skills can be given customised help to find work in their area of competence.

138. All people residing in Norway are granted equal access to health services, regardless of gender or ethnic background. Women are entitled to prenatal care and midwife services, regardless of residence status. Special groups have been established for minority women under the auspices of a number of health-care institutions in Norway. Nutrition seminars have also been arranged for immigrant women, and mental-health brochures have been published in multiple languages.

139. The Ministry of Health and Care Services has prepared an immigrant health strategy for 2013-2017 which identifies various health challenges faced by some immigrant groups. The measures pursued to date are strengthening of public health clinic and school health services, increased funding for the Norwegian Centre for Minority Health Research (NAKMI) and strengthening the Norwegian Diabetes Association's work aimed at immigrants. In addition, the Directorate of Health is examining various information measures to prevent late testing and delayed diagnosis of breast cancer among immigrant women.

Paragraph 36 (c)

140. On behalf of the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, Statistics Norway produces statistics that show whether former participants in the introduction programme are engaged in the labour market, studying or neither of the two. The statistics show large differences in results for women and men. Among those who completed the programme in 2012, 70 per cent of the men were employed or studying as of November 2013, compared with 52 per cent of the women. The Government has begun an evaluation of the Introduction Act, which will include proposals and recommendations to strengthen and further develop the programmes. Due to the major differences between men and women in transitioning to work and/or education, the recommendations will take gender differences into account where appropriate.

Paragraph 36 (d)

141. Gender-related persecution, including that of lesbians and transgender people, is a relevant factor in asylum case decisions in Norwegian practice, as expressly

[6] http://www.nokut.no/en/Foreign-education/Other-recognition-systems/Recognition-Procedure-for-Persons-without-Verifiable-Documentation/.

provided for in section 29, second paragraph (f) of the Immigration Act, which states that persecution may take the form of "acts of a gender-specific or child-specific nature". This legal provision codified previous practice, and entered into force on 1 January 2010. In recent years, the immigration authorities' processing of asylum applications from LGBTI (lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender and intersex) persons has received particular attention. The guidelines for processing asylum applications involving gender-related persecution were clarified and updated by the Ministry of Justice and Public Security on 29 June 2012 (see Circular G-08/2012 — Guidelines on gender-related persecution). Rape, forced sterilisation or abortion, genital mutilation, bride burning, and honour killing may constitute persecution, according to the guidelines.

142. On 29 March 2012 the Supreme Court issued a judgment that introduces a legal procedure for handling asylum applications submitted by LGBTI people. The method is consistent with an interpretation method laid down in a UK Supreme Court judgment on 7 July 2010 in *HJ (Iran) and HT (Cameroon) v Secretary of State for the Home Department (UKSC 31)*. On 29 June 2012 the Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security instructed the Directorate of Immigration (UDI) to follow this interpretation method (see Circular GI-07/2012). The method is also followed today by the Immigration Appeals Board (UNE), which handles appeals against UDI asylum denials.

143. In 2014 the Government initiated a study of practice in asylum cases based on religious or social-group affiliation (sexual orientation), and a comparison of practice with UNHCR recommendations and the EU's Qualification Directive. The study, completed in 2015, shows that Norwegian practice largely complies with UNHCR guidelines and European Court of Justice judgments. Its recommendations involve clarifying practice and improving case processing.

144. Residents of asylum reception centres take part in information programmes that address a variety of topics. Sexual orientation and the status of LGBTI people are among issues covered in the information programmes for adults and in a special programme for children and youth.

Paragraph 37

145. No activity is currently planned to address the issue of pension sharing upon divorce.

Paragraph 38

146. No work is currently underway on the issue of community property.

Paragraph 39

147. The Beijing Platform for Action, from the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, is a politically binding reference document for Norwegian gender equality efforts that was also cited in the white paper on gender equality submitted in autumn 2015 by the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion. Norway has committed to reporting every five years, and last submitted a status report to the United Nations in spring 2014.

Paragraph 40

148. Gender equality and women's rights are an important priority in Norwegian development policy. The gender perspective is to be integrated into all initiatives, including efforts to support developing countries in their pursuit of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It is manifested at both project and programme level by the status granted to equality as a cross-cutting theme. Norway also has a goal of providing rights-based development assistance. This priority is further emphasised in *Opportunities for All: Human Rights in Norway's Foreign Policy and Development Cooperation* (Meld. St. 10 (2014-2015)), a Ministry of Foreign Affairs white paper in which all the chapters reflect women's rights and one chapter is devoted entirely to equality and women's rights. A special guide to establishing rights-based development cooperation is under preparation. The rights dimension will also be integrated systematically into the Grant Scheme Rules.

149. A separate Norwegian action plan for women's rights and development, covering the period 2013-2015, has as its motto: "Equal rights — equal opportunities". CEDAW is central to the plan, and the Committee's recommendations are held up as a good basis for gender-equality efforts at national level. The plan covers development policy and foreign policy alike.

150. As co-chair of the Secretary-General's MDG Advocacy Group, Prime Minister Erna Solberg has sought global recognition of the importance of gender equality in achieving the MDGs, with special emphasis on girls' right to education (MDGs 2 and 3). In recent years Norway has substantially increased financial support for girls' education. Norway is also one of the largest donors to UN-Women, and has a specific budget line for gender equality and women's rights (NOK 330 million). Women's right to health, especially maternal health (MDG 5), is another important Norwegian priority, both politically and financially, with emphasis on access to contraceptive services, safe maternity care, safe and legal abortion, and sex education. Norway has also supported measures aimed at men and religiously motivated leaders in order to spread understanding of, and support for, equality.

151. Norwegian gender equality assistance over the years was recently the subject of an independent evaluation. The evaluation report was presented in 2015. Preparations are under way to address its recommendations for more strategic use of resources, including identifying areas where Norway has comparative advantages and its support can play a catalytic role, by drawing lessons from the work of pilot embassies, and by introducing gender equality more effectively into the major priority areas of Norwegian development assistance. Also being examined are methods to strengthen administrative capacity and expertise in development cooperation as related to gender goals, project follow-up and reporting of outcomes.

152. Norway has worked hard to ensure that gender equality and women's rights are incorporated in the MDG successor framework: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Paragraph 41

153. The Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion translated the Committee's conclusions in 2012 and published them on the Ministry's website soon after they were received. The conclusions were distributed to all ministries and

other relevant stakeholders. Civil society organizations were called in to a meeting on follow-up efforts.

Paragraph 42

154. Norway ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2013 and submitted its first report in 2015. Norway decided in 2002 not to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. Norway has ratified all key human rights instruments and the core ILO conventions on workers' rights. These also apply to foreign nationals resident in Norway. Norway gives high priority to efforts to improve labour standards, which are crucial in the context of migrants' rights. Norway has signed the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. Existing provisions of the Norwegian Penal Code cover the act of enforced disappearance as defined in Article 2 of the Convention. However, Norway is considering whether a separate legal provision criminalising enforced disappearance should be adopted before ratification of the Convention. Certain other issues will also be considered before potential ratification of the Convention by Norway. It is a national human rights priority to work with a view to ratifying and implementing the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

155. States parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that women have the opportunity, on equal terms with men and without any discrimination, to represent their governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organizations.

Paragraph 43

156. Reference is made to Norway's progress report of March 2014, with replies pertaining to paragraphs 24 and 30.

Paragraph 44

157. The Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion is coordinating efforts to prepare Norway's Ninth Periodic Report to CEDAW. All ministries and their subordinate agencies are contributing to this report. It is seen as important to have an transparent process, with the involvement of civil society actors. A web page containing information on the preparation of the report has been set up on the Government's website. Funds have been allocated for a shadow report to the state report in 2016. This report will be made available in both Norwegian and English.

III. Information relating to the articles in parts I, II, III and IV in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Article 2 (a)

158. We refer to the Common Core report (2013), paragraphs 99-105. See also the replies under paragraph 10 above on amendments to the Constitution. Since June 2009, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against

Women and its Optional Protocol have been incorporated into the Norwegian Human Rights Act and given precedence when in conflict with domestic law.

Article 2 (b)

159. For information on the Gender Equality Act, reference is made to the Common Core Document, paragraphs 179-181. In 2013, the Storting adopted four new equality and anti-discrimination acts. These entered into force on 1 January 2014.

Parental leave rights

160. In December 2012, the Storting amended the Gender Equality Act to clarify employee rights with regard to parental leave. The amendment came into force in January 2013. It specified that a worker who is or has been on parental leave is entitled to:

- Return to the same, or corresponding, position
- Benefit from improvements in working conditions to which the worker would otherwise have been entitled during the absence, and
- Make pay claims and, in pay negotiations, be assessed in the same way as other workers in the undertaking

161. This provision established as law what already could be inferred from the Gender Equality Act's prohibition of gender discrimination. The reason for clarifying matters by means of a separate provision was to make the protection against discrimination more effective, so employees do not have their position weakened, their wage progression diminished, or their working conditions altered as a consequence of taking parental leave.

Duty to disclose wage information

162. In the Gender Equality Act of 2013, a rule was introduced under which an employee who suspects wage discrimination may require the employer to provide written information about wage levels and about the criteria used to determine wages for comparable employees. Similar provisions were added to the other discrimination acts. The Ministry stated that, in its view, a duty to disclose wage information would have its greatest impact as an instrument to equalize pay between men and women. The purpose of introducing a duty to disclose wage information was to promote greater wage transparency in the workplace. Transparency about pay is important to the effectiveness of the discrimination protection.

163. The Government wishes to strengthen gender equality and improve discrimination protections for everyone, and intends therefore to propose a comprehensive equality and anti-discrimination act. A proposal for a comprehensive new equality and anti-discrimination act was distributed widely for comment in October 2015, with a reply deadline of January 2016. The proposal calls for replacing the four existing gender equality and anti-discrimination acts (the Gender Equality Act, the Anti-Discrimination Act, the Anti-Discrimination and Accessibility Act and the Sexual Orientation Anti-Discrimination Act) with a new consolidated act in order to strengthen discrimination protections.

164. In the government's view, a comprehensive statute could provide clearer, more coherent protection against discrimination, regardless of the discriminatory grounds

and social context, and will thus be a more effective tool. Consolidated legislation will also simplify the way regulations are applied, make the statute more understandable, and open the way for more consistency in enforcement and judicial practice. Essentially, the level of protection will be equal no matter the discriminatory grounds. The statute will nevertheless take into account the special characteristics of certain types of discrimination. The protection against discrimination due to pregnancy and the rules on universal design and individual accommodation for persons with disabilities are cases in point.

165. It is important that the wording of the Act clearly convey the strictness of the anti-discrimination protections. It is proposed, therefore, that the text state clearly that the protections are especially strict in working life and with regard to pregnancy and parental leave. A provision specifying prohibition of discrimination that is grounded in a combination of factors (compound discrimination) is also proposed.

Article 2 (c)

166. Public administration in Norway is organized such that individual sector-based ministries are responsible for services and policies affecting the entire population. The authorities in different sectors and at different levels of government have the responsibility for gender equality policies within their areas of authority. This sector-authority principle places responsibility at the point where policy instruments are applied. It also facilitates the integration of gender-equality matters into all aspects of administration. Each authority shall monitor the situation in its area of responsibility and report on the consequences for both women and men.

167. A key strategy in the Government's gender-equality approach is to incorporate the gender perspective into all policy-making, whether at the central, regional or local level.

168. The Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion has a coordinating role in following up sector responsibilities and ensuring a coherent equality policy. A senior-level steering group for gender equality is the ministries' permanent forum for matters relating to the Government's equality and anti-discrimination policy. The Ministry may support other ministries in their gender-equality efforts, if needed. Cross-sectoral action plans and white papers stand as examples of efforts to coordinate and develop the equality policy. The Ministry helps acquire knowledge, coordinates the work of the ministries and oversees joint reporting on international commitments.

169. The Ministry also provides the funding for a coordinator position for gender-related statistics at Statistics Norway. The Ministry has also contributed to the creation of a national Centre for Research on Gender Equality (CORE). CORE was established at the social research institute NOVA and collaborates formally with researchers at the University of Oslo. CORE will be conducting research on education and the labour market, on family and working life, and on internationalisation, public opinion and policy. The Ministry has provided the centre with NOK 4 million annually for three years, from 2013 to 2015. The Ministry will exercise its option and extend the contract by one year, through 2016.

Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs

170. The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs is the Government's directorate for equality and anti-discrimination efforts. The Directorate is tasked with carrying out current policy and following through on Government action plans and measures, as well as knowledge development, documentation and analysis. The documentation and analysis work includes operating a forum for gender-equality data and for national statistics on crisis centre services. As an administrative body, the Directorate administers grants for organizations focused on family and equality policy, grants for incest centres and rape centres, grants or operating support for Norway's three centres for equality, and grants for a men's resource centre called Reform.

Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud, and Equality and Anti-Discrimination Tribunal

171. Anti-discrimination legislation is enforced both by the ordinary courts and by the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud and the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Tribunal. See Norway's Eighth Periodic Report, paragraph 50, and the latest Common Core Document, chapter III A 6.

172. The Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion has initiated a major study of the enforcement apparatus for equality and discrimination issues. The aim is to strengthen enforcement and exert control over directorate responsibilities. The study also includes an assessment of whether the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Tribunal can be expanded, and granted authority to impose compensation for non-pecuniary damage. The PricewaterhouseCoopers law firm is carrying out the study, which is to be submitted by 1 March 2016.

Article 2 (d)

173. In November 2011, the Stoltenberg II Government issued its action plan for gender equality, Equality 2014. The action plan was completed in 2014; a summary of the plan was prepared, along with a report on the objectives and indicators in the plan.

174. In 2010, a commission was appointed by the Stoltenberg II cabinet. Its members were asked to study Norwegian gender equality policies as related to phase of life, ethnicity and class. In 2011 the commission submitted its first report, titled Official Norwegian Report 2011: 18 *Structure for Equality*. The report analyses the government's system for promoting gender equality, and includes a set of recommendations on how to improve the system. In 2012 the commission submitted its second and final report, Official Norwegian Report 2012: 15 *Policy for Equality*. The report comprehensively documents Norway's gender equality challenges associated with systematic differences in how men and women live today in terms of economics, employment, education, including how women and men deal with the issue of violence. The commission issued a number of recommendations for meeting these challenges at national level.

175. In June 2013, the Stoltenberg II cabinet presented a white paper on gender equality (Meld. St. 44 (2012-2013)). The white paper was withdrawn when a new government took office in autumn 2013. On 9 October 2015, the Government

presented the white paper *Gender Equality in Practice: Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (Meld. St. 7 (2015-2016))*. See annex 2.

Article 2 (e)

176. The 1978 Gender Equality Act contained a special exception to the prohibition against discrimination, covering religious communities. In the Gender Equality Act of 2013, the special rule for religious communities was rescinded. Differential treatment of men and women in religious communities must now be assessed in accordance with the general provision relating to legal differential treatment. Under that provision, differential treatment does not violate the prohibition against discrimination when the treatment in question has a fair objective and is necessary to achieve the purpose, and when the negative impact of the differential treatment on the person or persons whose position will worsen is reasonably proportionate in view of the intended result. The amended legislation represents no change in the right of religious communities to engage in legal differential treatment.

Article 2 (f) and Article 2 (g)

177. See the information presented under Articles 3-16, below.

Article 3

178. On 21 May 2015, the Government adopted a declaration of basic principles and broad objectives for its collaboration with the NGO sector.

179. As part of the Government's 2015-2017 strategy to combat child poverty, measures have been started to help improve living conditions for children and youth in poverty. The strategy's purpose is twofold, and it prioritises intensified preventive efforts to keep poverty from being passed down from parents to children. The strategy contains a number of measures to mitigate negative consequences for children and youth who grow up in poverty as reflected in the strategy's seven priority areas:

- Prevention by strengthening at-risk families
- Completing educational programmes — kindergarten and school
- Participation and inclusion — recreation, culture and sport
- Good health care for all children and youth
- Access to employment for young people and parents
- Research and statistics
- Sharing of responsibility and expertise — state, municipal and NGO sectors.

180. A comprehensive survey of living conditions by Uni Health (2013) found that tolerance towards LGBT persons has grown over time. Compared to the general population, however, higher percentages of the LGBT population report mental health problems that curtail social activities and working life, and a higher proportion have attempted suicide, according to the study's main findings. Young LGB persons, especially women, and LGB immigrants score more negatively on several variables.

181. We refer to paragraph 133 of Norway's Eighth Periodic Report to the Committee. The number of same-sex marriages has been relatively stable since a new universal Marriage Act was adopted in 2009. In 2014, the number of marriages between same-sex couples was 269. Women account for about 60 per cent of same-sex marriages. There has been marked growth in the number of couples — especially lesbian couples — with children in common. The risk of breakup for same-sex couples has traditionally been greater than for heterosexual couples. That also applies to couples with children in common. In 2014, 78 married same-sex couples separated, and 50 married same-sex couples divorced. In addition, there were 26 separations and 35 divorces among couples who had retained their status as registered partners at the time of the transition to the new Marriage Act.

182. Women are a prioritized group in regional and district policy. One objective is for women to receive at least 40 per cent of direct business-oriented funds distributed by the Ministry of Local Government and Modernization.

Article 4.1

183. Today, a minimum of 40 per cent of board seats in public limited companies (ASAs) must be held by each gender. The Norwegian Public Limited Liability Companies Act has been important for ensuring women's participation in key parts of Norwegian business and industry, and have directly affected the percentage of women on the boards of the companies covered by the provisions. In 1993, female representation on the boards of public limited companies was three per cent. The share today is more than 40 per cent.[7]

184. In companies partly owned by the state, the share of women among owner-appointed/shareholder-elected board members was 47 per cent in autumn 2015.

185. Men are in the majority as board chairpersons, too. A survey of 247 of the largest companies (by revenue) in Norway shows that 9 out of 10 board chairpersons are men.[8] For a number of years, the state has had a clear aim of increasing the proportion of chairpersons who are women. This has contributed to a greater proportion of female chairpersons at these companies than in other Norwegian companies. In companies with state ownership, 38 per cent of chairpersons were female as of 31 March 2015. The Government wants more women on boards in all business sectors. In recent decades, gender equality has been in focus on the largest corporate boards.

186. In 2016, The Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion has provided NOK 1.0 million for a pilot project on the certification of workplaces that can satisfy a pre-determined gender equality and diversity standard.

Article 4.2

187. The vaccine against human papillomavirus (HPV) was introduced during the 2009/2010 academic year as part of the childhood immunization programme for girls in their last year of primary school. The HPV vaccine protects against the types of HPV that cause at least 70 per cent of cervical cancer cases. To date, anyone who has wanted to receive the vaccine, apart from the girls in Year 7, has had to pay for it through her own doctor or at a public health clinic.

[7] Statistics Norway (2014d).

[8] Halrynjo, Teigen and Nadim (2014).

188. HPV-related cancers have a social dimension, in that women of lower education and income are less likely to have Pap smears performed, are slower to seek medical help after symptoms appear, and are less willing and less able to pay for HPV vaccinations themselves.

189. For a two-year period starting in 2016, the Government will offer free catch-up vaccinations against human papillomavirus (HPV) for all women up to 26 years of age.

190. By international standards Norwegian women enjoy good reproductive health. This is thought to be related to high levels of education, women's status and self-determination in health matters. Maternal mortality in Norway is very low and national guidelines have been developed for prenatal, birth and postnatal care.

191. The average age of women giving birth for the first time is rising. At base, this is an unfortunate development because mother and child alike are more prone to complications with increased maternal age. High age before a first pregnancy increases the need for assisted reproductive technology. Since 2007, more than 3 per cent of children in Norway have been born after assisted reproduction.

192. The Norwegian Directorate of Health has worked in several areas to improve reproductive health services and women's reproductive prospects. Among the most important measures are a development strategy for midwifery and a guide to quality standards for maternity care. The guide will provide the basis for developing better and more predictable maternity care services, with quality at every stage. Quality standards are being accentuated, and requirements for maternity units clarified. Postnatal care and safety guidelines issued in 2014 include 41 recommendations relating to the infant, mother and family. Also published in 2014 were national professional guidelines on detecting violence while providing prenatal care. The guidelines recommend that health-care personnel broach the topic of domestic violence as early as possible in pregnancy, as part of routine clinical practice.

193. Hospitals have increased their focus on childbirth and prenatal care in collaboration with the primary care service. Girls and women who have been exposed to genital mutilation may be prone to complications during childbirth. Outpatient clinics, paediatric departments and maternity departments will provide information about health problems and other possible medical consequences of genital mutilation. Each health region has a woman's clinic with a special responsibility to follow up girls and women at risk of, or exposed to, genital mutilation. The clinic offers counselling, physical examination, treatment and the possibility of de-infibulation surgery.

194. In recent decades abortions have declined. The abortion rate among certain groups of women with immigrant backgrounds is far higher than in the general female population. Suitably adapted information and easy access to contraception are measures capable of lowering the number of abortions. Oslo University Hospital and the city of Oslo operate a free evening outpatient clinic for women with immigrant backgrounds who need health information, postnatal monitoring or guidance on contraception and family planning.

195. The Government has ensured that nurses and midwives have prescribing authority for all types of hormonal contraception and copper IUDs. An extended right permitting nurses and midwives to prescribe any type of hormonal contraceptive method to women over 16 was adopted on 22 March 2015 with effect

from 1 January 2016. This measure will make all types of contraception more easily available to women over 16.

196. Few teenagers today have children. Most teens who do become pregnant choose to have an abortion. In 2013, 19 women aged 15 or younger and 162 women aged 16-17 gave birth to a child. These accounted for 0.3 per cent of all births. The school health service and public health clinics, where health personnel counsel young people on physical, psychological and sexual health matters, are well attended. In many places such services play an important role in sex education. The authorities have strengthened the school health service and public health clinics for a number of years.

197. The authorities will be drawing up an overall sexual-health strategy, including measures to prevent unwanted pregnancies. This strategy is scheduled for submission in 2016. A strategy on young people's health will also be prepared.

198. Research on the effects of pregnancy and birth on women's health in general has been funded by the Research Council of Norway as part of the focus on women's health. One result is that potential childbirth complications such as urinary incontinence and accidental bowel leakage have been added to the topics covered in Nord-Trøndelag county's health survey. Previously, the topics had received little attention. One project that received funding was a European study on gender-based violence and childbirth (funded in the 2011-2014 period). The study's goal was to see if rape or other involuntary sexual activity has negative consequences for pregnant women.

199. Excessive body weight is a growing problem, including for women with immigrant backgrounds. Over 50 per cent of Turkish women and about 40 per cent of Pakistani women are obese. Many public health clinics provide excellent services to immigrant women, including breastfeeding groups and nutritional guidance.

200. Every fourth pregnant women in Norway is overweight, increasing the risk of pregnancy complications and future health challenges for both mother and child. Norway is participating in an EU project to develop models to prevent obesity among pregnant women.

201. The Medical Birth Registry is a nationwide record containing data on all births in Norway. The registry helps to clarify the causes and consequences of health problems related to pregnancy and childbirth, and to monitor the incidence of congenital disorders. All maternity units in Norway report births to the Medical Birth Registry.

Article 5 (a)

202. The Official Norwegian Report (NOU 2012: 15) Policy for Equality highlights traditionally gender-skewed educational choices as a key challenge to equality goals. Traditional gender patterns in education contribute to perpetuating a gender-divided labour market and differences in wage level, working hours and workload.

203. The labour market in Norway is sharply divided by gender, with women and men pursuing different professions and participating in different industries and sectors. A gender-divided labour market serves as a partial curb on individual choice. Fixed patterns in the labour market lead to inflexibility, resulting in poor

utilisation of human capital. Gender division in the labour market also leads to disparity in career opportunities for women and men.

Article 5 (b)

204. We refer to paragraph 66 in Norway's Eighth Periodic Report to the Committee. Both parents are important caregivers in children's lives. The Government wishes parents to have equal status as caregivers, with the same rights. The Government's family policy hinges on choice and flexibility; individual families themselves are in the best position to assess which solutions are most suitable for them.

205. When both mother and father have earned the right to parental benefits, part of the benefit period is reserved for the father. The father's quota had increased steadily in recent years, until 2014, when it was cut. As from 1 July 2011, it had been 12 weeks, and from 1 July 2013 14 weeks, but from 1 July 2014, the father's quota was reduced to 10 weeks. As from summer 2013, the parental benefit period was divided into three parts, and the mother's quota was introduced. There is now a quota for each parent, and a longer joint period that the parents can divide as they wish. Overall, the benefit period is either 46 or 56 weeks after birth, depending on the degree of coverage. In addition, the mother is entitled to up to three weeks of parental benefit before birth. The Government wants parents to have more opportunity to choose how the benefit period is allocated, and has therefore increased the joint period by eight weeks, while shortening somewhat the quotas reserved for the mother and father. Today, the paternal and maternal quotas are both 10 weeks in length, with an additional joint period of 26/36 weeks. Fathers can take more than the paternal quota, but in that case the mother is required to be in activity, such as working or studying.

206. In summer 2014 the Government sought comments on a proposal to establish a new, expanded exemption system for the parental benefit programme's maternal and paternal quotas. Follow-up on the proposal will be considered along with other possible modifications and simplifications to the rules. The timeline for this work will be coordinated with a major IT modernization project at the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV).

207. Since 1 January 2014, all women have had a statutory right to paid breastfeeding breaks of up to an hour on workdays with a contractual working time of 7 hours or more. This right extends through the child's first year. Previously, the right was dependent on agreement with the employer, and some women in the private sector lacked it.

208. The cash-for-care benefit scheme was changed with effect from 1 August 2012. The scheme was then eliminated for two-year-olds, while the rate was increased for children aged 13-18 months. From 1 August 2014, the rate was increased to NOK 6,000 per month, and age differentiation was discontinued, so that all one-year-olds receive the same higher amount. The increase in the rate makes cash-for-care benefits a more genuine alternative to day care for families that prefer it.

Article 6

209. See annex 3 chapter 4. A new action plan against human trafficking will be presented, with consideration given to recommendations contained in a report by the Council of Europe's expert group, GRETA, as well as proposals by the Police's Coordinating Unit for Victims of Trafficking (KOM). GRETA recommended in particular that Norway introduce a more formalized system of victim identification (National Referral Mechanism).

210. From 2015, NOK 15 million has been allocated for the establishment and operation of special groups in the largest police districts to investigate trafficking.

211. The Ministry is also distributing up to NOK 10 million from 2015 to projects/programmes that can help counter trafficking in Norway. Projects that may qualify include:

- Targeted information measures/campaigns to increase awareness of human trafficking in Norway, so that more victims can be identified
- Creation/expansion of telephone services for victims
- Residential or follow-up programmes for trafficking victims
- Other projects designed to prevent trafficking or assist victims

212. Annually since 2009, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security has allocated NOK 10 million for measures related to prostitution. The funds go to projects that can improve the situation for prostitutes and help women and men out of prostitution, as well as reduce demand.

213. The prohibition against purchasing sex was evaluated by an independent research institute in 2014. In accordance with the Government's policy platform, a white paper will be submitted as a basis for the Storting to debate the ban on purchasing sex and other current challenges associated with prostitution.

214. In its white paper on the future of primary healthcare (Meld. St 26 (2014-2015)), the Government gave notice that an evaluation will be started in 2015 to determine whether health legislation in Norway ought to clarify the duty of the health and care services to help uncover and avert violence and sexual abuse.

Article 7 (a)

215. In Norway, women have the same right as men to vote in public elections and referendums, and are equally eligible to run for all publicly elected bodies. See also the reply under paragraph 17.

Article 7 (b)

216. The Ministry of Local Government and Modernization's responsibility with regard to Articles 7 (b) and 14 (f) will be to ensure that the voices of all groups are heard in the planning system. This is done by preparing a legal framework, and through communication and counselling. Towards that end, a participation guide has been developed. At the national level, measures are being undertaken to increase awareness and develop skills, including through the network of the Norwegian Directorate of Health and by developing digital concept talks aimed at planning

authorities (via the counties), private planners and civil society. In the counties, the guide is disseminated at guidance sessions, gatherings and conferences.

217. Under the outlined legal principles and concrete provisions of the Planning and Building Act, it is up to the planning authority to determine how participation is to take place.

Article 7 (c)

218. Immigrants in Norway engage in voluntary activities to a relatively high degree, but often in other areas of civil society than the majority population. Immigrants and their children, especially women and girls, are generally underrepresented as members of traditional Norwegian NGOs.

219. Several immigrant organizations have become an integral part of the voluntary sector in Norway. The Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion provides grants to immigrant organizations and other NGOs, both local and nationwide, to encourage participation, dialogue and interaction. The aim of such grants is to strengthen local participation by immigrants and their children and to facilitate access to social networks. Grants are awarded to national resource centres that focus on integration issues. Grants are also available to NGOs that provide information and guidance for new immigrants, especially to labour migrants and other immigrants not covered by the Introduction Act.

220. Dialogue and contact between the Government and civil society are important aspects of policy-making and policy-implementation processes. The Government will be renewing its dialogue with immigrants and Norwegian-born children of immigrant parents. Among the newly instituted measures is an annual dialogue conference. The first conference was held in October 2014, and the second in October 2015. The dialogue conference is organized by the Government as an additional way to obtain input from immigrants and Norwegian-born children of immigrant parents.

221. Since 2009, the Directorate of Integration and Diversity entered into binding cooperation agreements with eight major NGOs — the Association of NGOs in Norway, Norwegian People's Aid, the Norwegian Red Cross, Save the Children Norway, the Norwegian Women's Public Health Association, the Norwegian Football Federation, the Norwegian Trekking Association, the Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports (NIF) — on developing and strengthening activities for girls and women in local communities, and on recruiting more members and elected officials with minority backgrounds to NGOs.

222. Annual grants are made for operation of family and equality organizations and for measures in this policy area. Project topics that are given particular priority include measures for strengthening gender equality efforts for women of minority background, men's roles, interaction between women and men in gender-equality work, implementation of action plans from the United Nations Conferences on Women and other international plans and programmes. Project topics that increase public interest and involvement have also been prioritised.

223. In 2013 Norway celebrated the Centenary of Women's Suffrage. The anniversary was celebrated throughout the year with a series of events nationwide. The Government's intention was to celebrate the suffrage centenary with events throughout the country, but also internationally.

224. The committee was responsible for the Government's official centenary celebration programme. One of the main aims was to encourage NGO participation. Annual grants were made available both for planning and carrying out a variety of measures and celebrations. The committee's goal was to ensure that the centenary was marked in a way that fostered engagement and generated support for important democratic principles such as the right to vote, gender equality, participation and representation. The celebrations in 2013 were to highlight the importance of 1913 in Norway's history as well as democratic developments through the past century. A publication on Norwegian Gender Equality History 1913-2013 was commissioned by the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion. An important aim was to look to the future, examining what is needed to safeguard and enhance the Norwegian democracy.

225. As a preparatory step towards the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Platform, Beijing+20, Nordic NGOs organized the Nordic Forum Malmö from 12-15 June 2014. As many as 20 000 men and women met in Malmö to support the meeting's vision and slogan, "New Action on Women's Rights". The Norwegian Government supported the Nordic Forum financially, and all the Nordic equality ministers took part in the closing ceremony, where a concluding document titled "Feminist Agreements and Demands" was presented to the ministers.

Article 8

226. In 2015, the objective of equal representation of men and women at ambassadorial level was almost achieved (49 per cent). Women are close to being equally represented at the mid, higher and highest levels of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs payroll (57 per cent, 47 per cent and 42 per cent, respectively). Women are in the majority among Norwegian trainees in Norwegian embassies and delegations.

Article 9 (1) and (2)

227. Reference is also made to Norway's Eighth Periodic Report to CEDAW, paragraph 91. The Government has submitted a bill to the Storting to amend the Nationality Act to require those seeking Norwegian nationality to demonstrate Norwegian language ability and pass a social studies test. Under the bill, exceptions may be granted from the new requirements if warranted by extraordinary medical reasons or other weighty grounds.

Article 10 (a)-(h)

228. In general, Norwegian boys demonstrate weaker learning outcomes than girls, and perform worse than girls in most subjects. This has remained stable over time. However, learning outcomes among girls vary greatly, just as they do among boys. Significant differences in results also appear between subjects, tests and test forms when gender is considered. At the same time, research shows that gender must be viewed in conjunction with social background and immigrant background.

229. *Boys have a higher drop-out rate.* About 76 per cent of girls and 66 per cent of boys who began upper secondary education in 2008 completed their university admission certification or professional qualification within five years. The completion rate is especially low in vocational training, where only 56 per cent of boys successfully completed their studies after five years. The biggest factor in determining whether a pupil finishes upper secondary education is the level of his or

her marks in primary and lower secondary school. Children with highly educated parents receive on average better marks in primary and lower secondary school than the children of parents with little education.

230. Immigrants are statistically less likely to complete upper secondary education than the general population, and the gender gap is greater among immigrants. Norwegian-born children of immigrant parents are more likely to complete upper secondary education than pupils who have themselves immigrated, but are less likely to do so than other pupils. The drop-out rate among Norwegian-born children of immigrant parents is also higher for boys than for girls.[9]

231. A variety of measures have been initiated to improve pupil outcomes and increase completion rates in upper secondary education. These include *Ungdomstrinnssatsningen* (to improve lower secondary education), *Lærerløftet – på lag for kunnskapsskolen* (to enhance teaching strength), *0-23 samarbeidet* (coordinated support for ages 0-23), Ny Giv and *Program for bedre gjennomføring* (the latter two to boost upper secondary completion rates).

232. Upper secondary education in Norway is marked by differences in educational choices between boys and girls. More girls than boys choose general studies. Among vocational subjects, boys are far more likely to choose building and construction technology (5 per cent girls), engineering and industrial production (11 per cent girls) and electronics (6 per cent girls), while girls choose health and childhood development (85 per cent girls) and design and crafts (87 per cent girls).[10]

233. Starting with the 2013/2014 school year, the Ministry of Education and Research established a new social studies curriculum incorporating competence goals with more focus on gender equality. The curriculum also includes new competence goals improving pupil attitudes toward violence, abuse, sexuality-related violence, and domestic violence.

234. The subject *Working life* skills is designed to provide interested lower secondary students with greater opportunity to do practical work and try out vocational training options.[11] Findings from an evaluation of *Working life skills*[12] showed that girls' satisfaction with the subject weakens more as lower secondary school progresses. The curricula for the subjects have been revised, with the new curricula taking effect in the 2015/2016 academic year. The topic of traditional gender imbalances in educational and vocational options is included in the competence goals of *Educational choices*. The curriculum guides for the two subjects have now also been revised, and both discuss the topic of traditionally gender-skewed educational and vocational choices.[13]

235. Women now account for 60 per cent of students in higher education. The share of women is particularly dominant in health sciences, and female representation is

[9] Source: Statistics Norway (2014a).

[10] Source: Statistics Norway (2015c).

[11] Since 2011, all municipalities have been given the opportunity to introduce "Working life skills" on a trial basis.

[12] NOVA — Norwegian Social Research report 11/13, *Forsøk med arbeidslivsfag på ungdomstrinnet* (Working life skills trial at lower secondary level), Bakken et. al.

[13] See discussion in the Ministry of Education and Research white paper on educational policy (Meld. St. 20 (2012-2013)) / http://www.udir.no/kl06/UTV1-02.

well over 80 per cent in certain health-related studies.[14] Similarly, there is a gender imbalance the other way in some technological, mathematical and scientific subjects and in humanities such as history and philosophy. Men still dominate in those subjects, though in recent years there has been an accelerating trend towards gender balance.

236. The issuance of gender points for admission to higher education has been practiced in accordance with the Act relating to universities and university colleges. Individual institutions may apply to give additional points to the underrepresented gender when there are grounds to do so. A method used for many years has been to grant additional points to the underrepresented gender. This method is currently employed for female applicants to engineering studies (bachelor level), agricultural studies, maritime studies at university college level and integrated masters programmes in technology at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (excepting chemistry, biotechnology and industrial design. For example, the Norwegian University of Life Sciences gives gender points to men who apply to study animal care and veterinary science. Such quotas bind institutions to admit applicants into popular study programmes despite weaker marks while bypassing candidates of the opposite sex with better qualifications.

237. Around the year 2000, the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) experienced low demand for certain programmes and began discussing their titles. For example, the university changed *Maskinteknikk* (Mechanical engineering) to *Produktutvikling og produksjon* (Product development and production). After these changes the proportion of women increased from 21 to 33 per cent from 2004 to 2012.

238. *Jenter og teknologi* (Girls and technology) is a programme in collaboration between the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise, the University of Agder and several other participants aimed at increasing the proportion of girls studying maths and natural sciences at all levels. In the 2005-2014 period, the programme contributed to increasing the number of girls studying technology and engineering at the University of Agder from 128 to 395.

239. The Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion has provided NOK 1.0 million in 2016 to expand the programme to other parts of Norway.

240. Public authorities have a duty to provide guidance within their sector, according to section 11 of the Public Administration Act. The Act stipulates that the administration must provide sufficient guidance to enable citizens to effectively safeguard their own rights. Under the Health and Care Services Act section 3-3 municipalities have a responsibility to provide information, advice and guidance that could help resolve or prevent disease, injury or social problems. The Patients' and Users' Rights Act gives individuals the right to information needed for insight into their health status and the health care provided. Such information shall be provided through an interpreter if necessary. The Act gives individual patients the right to influence the provision of health and care services and to take part in choosing between available and justifiable methods of examination and treatment.

[14] In autumn 2014, for example, 86 per cent of those offered admission to study nursing were women.

Article 11.1 (a)

241. See annex 3 chapter 3.

Article 11.1 (b)

242. See annex 3 chapter 3.

Article 11.1 (c)

243. See article 5 a), article 10 and paragraph 22 b) above and a chapter III A in the common core document(2013).

Article 11.1 (d)

244. See annex 3 Chapter 3.1 about wage differences between women and men.

Article 11.1 (e)

245. See common core document Chapter I, A 5, d) about the National Insurance Scheme. On 1 March 2010, rules pertaining to the work assessment allowance were introduced. The work assessment allowance is a health-related benefit intended to secure income for up to 4 years for persons with reduced work capacity due to illness, injury or disability. The basic benefit is 66 per cent of previous income. To encourage working, the work assessment allowance may be adjusted in proportion to the number of hours the recipient has been or could have been in gainful employment without the right to a secured income being lost. In this way income is secured for women working part time who still have reduced work capacity after expiration of the sickness benefit period.

246. New disability benefit rules were introduced on 1 January 2015 to secure income for people who have seen their earnings capability permanently reduced by at least half due to permanent disease or injury. The benefit is permanent. With the new disability benefit, it will be easier and safer to combine the benefit with work: the disability benefit is reduced against earned income, but without a change in disability grade if the earned income is higher than the tax-free allowance. Persons who have not lost all earning capacity are assigned a disability grade. The purpose of the new disability benefit scheme is to make it worthwhile for a beneficiary to work part time, as opposed to receiving full disability benefits. Since more women than men receive disability benefits, the new rules help ensure that more women are able to participate in working life and form a job attachment without affecting their disability payment.

247. On 1 June 2015 the Government received the Official Norwegian Report "Assimilation and Resistance: Norwegian policy towards Tater/Romani people from 1850 to the present". The report was produced by a committee appointed by the Government in 2011.

248. The main task of the committee was to analyse the development of policies and measures directed at Romani/Tater people up to the present. Furthermore to produce a common understanding of what happened, including the effects on individuals and on the group and to form the basis for the positive continuation of the reconciliation process between the Romani/Tater people and wider society.

249. The report describes several challenges faced by female members of the group. Among the persons interviewed by the committee that produced the report, there was a "general opinion that employment is rare for Tater/Romani women". The committee suggests that there may be a need to "establish forums in which Romani/Tater [people] can share their experiences and knowledge of employment".

Article 11.1 (f)

250. See Norway's Eighth Periodic Report paragraph 108.

Article 11.2 (a)

251. See article 2 (b) above.

Article 11.2 (b) and 11.2. (c)

252. We refer to Norway's Eighth Periodic Report, paragraphs 110 and 111. In 2014, 81 per cent of women aged 25-54 were in employment, according to figures from Statistics Norway's Labour Force Survey. The parental benefit programme is a prerequisite for women's participation in the labour market on equal terms with men. Paid parental leave and day-care services facilitate more equal sharing of work between men and women, both in and outside the home. This has long been an important family policy objective. In recent decades there have been major changes in parental time spent in and outside the home. Mothers spend more time working professionally and less on household duties than before, while for fathers the change has been in the opposite direction. Since 2000, the most notable change has been among fathers with small children. More information is available under Article 5 (b) on the shared responsibilities of mothers and fathers.

Article 12

253. The primary objective for the Norwegian health service is for users and patients to receive equal services regardless of the individual's financial situation, social status, age, gender or ethnic background. It is a public responsibility to provide necessary health and care services to the whole population. Such services are primarily to be provided in the context of the local community, and enable users to live independent lives. Although most of the population enjoys good health and sound living conditions, there are challenges associated with health disparities related to social factors like education, occupation and income category.

254. The life expectancy of men was 71 years in 1970 and 79.7 years in 2013. Women's life expectancy rose from just over 77 years to 83.6 years in the same period. Such an increase in life expectancy might be expected to mean more years of reduced health and quality of life, but this is not the case. On average for women, 85 per cent of life's years are healthy ones, and for men the figure is 90 per cent — a marked improvement since 2005 for both sexes. The Ministry of Health and Care Services gives priority to women's health as a separate focus area.

255. An article published in the Scandinavian Journal of Public Health[15] shows inter alia that 50 per cent of Sami women surveyed had experienced emotional, physical or sexual violence during their lives. Twenty per cent of female Sami participants in the

[15] Eriksen, Hansen, Javo and Schei, Emotional, physical and sexual violence among Sami and non-Sami populations in Norway: The SAMINOR 2 questionnaire study, 2015.

study had experienced sexual violence. Likewise, 20 per cent of the female Sami participants under the age of 18 had experienced sexual violence. The study concludes that "[r]egardless of gender, Sami respondents were more likely to report interpersonal violence. The prevalence of any violence was substantial in both ethnic groups and for both genders; it was highest among Sami women."

Article 13 (a)

256. We refer to Norway's Eighth Periodic Report to the Committee and to previous reports. The National Insurance Act, which regulates the right to welfare benefits in connection with retirement, illness, disability, childbirth and adoption, generally grants the same rights to women and men. The parents may split the joint period of 26/36 weeks. Mothers are also entitled to up to three weeks of parental benefits before giving birth.

257. See also Article 5 (b), on the parental leave programme.

258. In June 2015 the Government appointed a public committee to review its support for families with children. Twenty years had passed since the programmes for families with children were consolidated. The Government believes the time has come for a thorough assessment of whether the programmes are optimally designed.

Article 13 (b)

259. Norwegian financial institutions are required to comply with the Norwegian Financial Contracts Act and the Financial Institutions Act as well as regulations on bank loans and financial credit. The laws and regulations are designed to ensure that financial institutions maintain sound lending practices. The laws and regulations are also intended to ensure that consumers, regardless of gender, receive the same degree of protection when taking out a bank loan, mortgage or other form of financial credit. Special reference is made to the Regulations on residential mortgage lending. These regulations provide objective criteria for use by banks in evaluating new mortgage lending applications, and are gender-neutral. All evaluations of credit applications must be non-discriminatory, in accordance with the Norwegian Gender Equality Act.

Article 13 (c)

260. Equal conditions for women and men are an important goal in the cultural sector, and the Ministry of Culture works systematically to improve gender balance. An example is the Ministry's appointment of board chairpersons and board members in certain organizations. In 2015, 59 per cent of board chairpersons and 54 per cent of board members in the cultural field were women. In 2010, by comparison, 56 per cent of chairpersons and 53 per cent of board members in similar organizations were women.

261. The division of grants between male and female recipients of Government Grants for Artists in 2014 showed 57 per cent women and 43 per cent men; the balance remained steady through the 2010-2014 period. The gender balance among beneficiaries of the guaranteed income programme has been roughly the same, with a greater proportion of women than men receiving guaranteed income and grants in the 2010-2014 period.

Article 14

262. The Ministry of Agriculture and Food has submitted a white paper on growth and entrepreneurship in agriculture-based industries, titled Meld. St. 31 (2014-2015) The Farm as a Resource — The Market as a Goal. The Government will work to advance alternative business development and a forward-looking form of agriculture in which the contributions of both men and women are put to use. White papers on land, forests and reindeer husbandry, which will point out special challenges in agriculture for men and women alike, will also be submitted.

263. The Ministry of Agriculture and Food has appointed a working group to examine recruitment challenges in agriculture. According to the group's mandate, discussion is to include challenges associated with the relative dearth of women taking over farming operations. The working group will submit its report in the spring 2016.

264. Women currently own 25 per cent of about 186,000 agricultural properties in the country. These are properties with at least 5 decares of agricultural area, and/or at least 25 decares of productive forest. Close to 68 per cent of properties are owned by men, while just under 7 per cent have impersonal owners (legal persons). Women often own and operate the smaller agricultural properties. For 37 per cent of properties transferred to new owners in 2014, the buyer was a woman. For properties sold on the free market, only about one in five of the new owners was a woman.

265. The statistics for active farm holdings in 2013 show 41 300 enterprises with personal holders (natural persons). About 15 per cent of these were women. In 1999, 12.9 per cent of personal holders were women. In 2013, 2 400 enterprises, or 5.5 per cent of the total, were operated by impersonal holders, compared with only 1.1 per cent in 1999.

266. For several years women have been given priority in funding allocations for private sector development. The share composed of women who are personal farmers has increased from 7.3 per cent in 1979 to 14 per cent in 2015. Women and young people (under 35 years of age) are prioritised by way of higher grant rates when funds are allocated for business development and generational succession.

267. The Ministry has supported several projects to promote gender equality and recruitment in recent years. The Norwegian Farmers and Smallholders Union received support for its project "Women, democracy and participation" (2012-2014). The project concluded that secure income development, better paternal leave and parental relief programmes, and special measures for continuing education and training were necessary to recruit and retain women in agriculture.

268. In 2014, 128 200 forest properties were registered, accounting for 70.3 million decares of productive forest. Figures from 2010 show that a quarter of forest property owners were women, and they controlled one fifth of the productive forest area. In 1979, 13 per cent of forest property owners were women. Most of the women are among the youngest and the oldest of forest owners.

269. The special interest group *Kvinner i skogbruket* (Women in forestry) is open to anyone with an interest in forestry, but specifically targets women. The organization works on issues related to female recruitment and gender equality in forestry. The

forestry industry has initiated a project called *Velg Skog* (Choose Forestry) to enhance recruitment to forestry education.

270. Counties are awarded NOK 20 million through the Agricultural Agreement to promote recruitment and human resource development in agriculture. The counties report that several measures have the additional aim of recruiting more women to agriculture. Several projects have involved cross-county cooperation.

271. Reindeer-herding women apply to the Reindeer Husbandry Development Fund (RUF) for project funding, or the Reindeer Herders' Association of Norway (NRL) seeks funding for development projects as an organization. The NRL has prepared a gender-equality strategy for reindeer herding that includes concrete follow-up measures. For the first time, moreover, the NRL has a female leader.

272. In 2012, 64 women owned their own share of a reindeer foraging area, or *siida*. This constitutes 12 per cent of the 538 *siida* shares in existence. Women own 25 per cent of the total reindeer stock in Norway. For fiscal 2013/2014, 62 *siida* shares of a total of 532 were held by female proprietors. That means female proprietorship of *siida* shares has remained stable at about 12 per cent, even as the number of *siida* shares has declined somewhat.

273. In all, women performed 153 full-time-equivalent years of work in reindeer herding in 2014. The corresponding figure for the previous year was 157.

Article 15

274. A person's financial situation does affect his or her possibilities to access to court proceedings. Norway has a scheme of free legal aid to help even the scales with regard to financial strength, and by extension the opportunity to participate in the legal process.

275. The NGO Legal Advice for Women (JURK) offers customised assistance towards self-help for women with unmet legal needs, by providing legal information, influence and legal assistance in specific cases. The organization's goal is to help all women become aware of their legal status, and to ensure equality in practice.

Article 16

276. See annex 3 chapter 4.2 on efforts to combat forced marriage.

277. The Gender Equality Act establishes a legal framework that helps promote equality between women and men. The Act protects individuals from gender discrimination while positively assigning certain duties to public and private actors.